

SERBIA'S REACTION REGARDING KOSOVO

- ☒ According to the statements of Serbian officials regarding the possible independence declaration of Kosovo, Belgrade was considering up to 16 measures, including return of Serbian troops to the province. Later, in the interview with Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic published on Thursday, these statements were changed and any military move was excluded. He said that all legal, diplomatic and practical resources, short of security and defense resources, will be used. Recently, Serbian Foreign minister visited Brussels and at his meeting with EU Enlargement Commissioner Oli Rehn, reminded EU that Belgrade is determined to meet all its obligations towards The Hague Tribunal and will finally initiate SAA next month. Full co-operation with the UN war crimes tribunal at The Hague, leading to the arrest and extradition of Ratko Mladic and other fugitives, is the main condition for signing a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). He also met NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and presented a document with the goals in the light of membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace program.[B92 05/09/2007]

HAGUE TRIBUNAL WITH SPECIAL EVIDENTIARY HEARING IN SARAJEVO

- ☒ As a part of the trial against former BiH Army General Rasim Delic, The Hague Tribunal will hold special evidentiary hearing in Sarajevo and it will be the first such hearing held outside The Hague courtroom. General Rasim Delic is charged with the rape, torture and murder of Bosnian Croats and Serbs committed by troops under his control. Prosecutors insisted judges to hear from Ali Ahmed Ali Hamad, also known as Ubejda (who is serving the prison sentence in BiH) for involvement in car bombing in Mostar. Bosnian media informed that the State Investigation and Protection Agency also searched the offices of the Kalinovik police department, confiscating a number of documents related to the 1992-1995 conflict.[B92.; 05/09/2007]

MACEDONIAN OPOSITION OPPOSED THE PROPOSED ELECTIONS LAW AMENDMENT

- ☒ Last week Macedonian opposition parties strongly criticized government's proposed elections law amendment. The cabinet's proposal would increase the number of seats in Macedonian parliament from 120 to 133. Among other provisions are reserved seats for

smaller minority groups and the Macedonian Diaspora in three major election districts abroad – North America, Europe – Africa and Australia – Asia. These rules would apply only to presidential and parliamentary elections. The main opposition party, Social Democratic Alliance, threatened with parliamentary boycott if the proposal is not withdrawn. Even stronger reaction came from the main ethnic Albanian party Democratic Union for Integration which submitted 4,100 counter proposals to the amendment. [Dnevnik, Utrinski Vesnik - 06/09/07; Makfax, A1TV - 05/09/07]

BULGARIA TO ABOLISH VISA REGIME FOR NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES

- ☒ Last week Bulgarian Foreign Minister, Ivailo Kalfin, announced that Bulgaria is considering the possibility to introduce a visa-free regime with neighboring countries. Still, this initiative is just a draft document that has been prepared and should wait European commission approval. Bulgaria introduced visas for its neighbours in January 2007, after its accession to the EU. Though free of charge, visas seriously affected the level of cross-border transactions between Bulgaria and neighbouring Western Balkans states. [SeTimes.com 09/09/2007]